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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KAMPALA 001079

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DEPARTMENT PASS TO USAID AND OFDA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [EAID](#) [UG](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA NOTES (June 17-30, 2007)

¶1. (U) Summary: The following Northern Uganda Notes provides information on the situation on the ground and USG activities aimed at meeting Mission's objectives in northern Uganda. These objectives include promoting regional stability through peace and security, good governance, access to social services, economic growth, and humanitarian assistance. Post appreciates feedback from consumers on the utility of this product and any gaps in information that need to be filled. End Summary.

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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES  
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¶2. (SBU) The Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) negotiators worked on justice, accountability, and reconciliation principles for the past weeks. Both sides presented position papers which the mediation team harmonized. The LRA was unhappy that all of its points were not included and requested that the mediator change procedures to allow separate discussions of twenty issues it recommended. The international observers and the GOU delegation viewed this recommendation as a delaying tactic and opposed the change. Two new lawyers--not known to be International Criminal Court experts--from Tanzania joined the LRA delegation.

¶3. (SBU) On June 29, the parties signed an agreement on the general principles for accountability and reconciliation. They have agreed that a national legal solution combined with traditional mechanisms of accountability and reconciliation would be developed. Formal courts and tribunals would adjudicate gross human rights violations. The agreement provided for truth-telling and truth-seeking processes. The GOU agreed to take the LRA off its terrorist list after a final peace deal is reached and disarmament, demobilization, and rehabilitation occurs. The more contentious issues not resolved included: the continued existence of the LRA after disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and whether reconciliation will only be between the Acholi and LRA or nationwide between north and south. The talks were recessed for one month to allow the GOU and LRA to consult with stakeholders in northern Uganda before agreeing to a final position on justice and accountability.

¶4. (SBU) USG Activities: P/E Chief met frequently with the parties, international observers, and technical advisors to the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT) during two separate trips to Juba from June 19-22 and June 26-28.

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY  
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15. (SBU) The distribution of bad seeds is a hot political issue, but unlikely to impact food security negatively. Germination rates of peanut and maize seed distributed to IDPs in the Acholi and Lango regions during the April to May planting season were low, well below the normal rate of 80 percent for these two crops. The Government of Uganda (GOU) Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has been blamed in the press for distributing poor quality seeds and tools but OPM asserts the fault lies with local government in the north from overlong storage. A political tit-for-tat has ensued between northern leaders and the GOU/OPM.

16. (SBU) The political bickering masks the real problem, which is a weak seed certification system exacerbated by increased demand for seed in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. A disjoined and fledgling resettlement package system also has contributed to problems for returnees. Several NGOs have requested replacement seeds and were redistributing. However, for the larger distributions, it has been more difficult to trace the seeds back to the distributor. Despite the noise over failed seed, FAO expects the overall impact on food security to be low. Initial results of post-distribution surveys by FAO show humanitarian distribution of seed make up only 30 to 40 percent of the seeds planted. Peanuts and maize were only a small portion of this 30-40 percent.

17. (SBU) Germination tests by FAO for the July to August planting season show normal results (80 percent or greater) for all crops except peanuts. Seed fairs, which use a voucher system to enable IDPs to purchase seed of their choice from local sellers, were not adversely affected. Peanuts were the most popular crop at seed fairs, and post harvest surveys show good results. USAID/OFDA provided \$3.2 million to support seed distributions and fairs in FY 2007.

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18. (SBU) USG Activities: USAID officially opened its new office in Gulu to much fanfare on Thursday, June 21st. More than 450 guests were in attendance and had the opportunity to visit 15 open houses of partner organizations in Gulu and view 33 displays by the USG and its partners. In addition to Ambassador Browning, numerous government ministers attended, including the Minister of Health, Minister of State for Environment, Minister of State for Relief and Disaster Preparedness, Minister of State for Defense, Minister of State for Primary Education and the Minister of Ethics and Integrity. The ministers toured sites with the Ambassador and USAID Mission Director. GOU officials recognized the contributions and support of the U.S. Government for the people of northern Uganda. This sentiment was echoed by local government officials, traditional and religious leaders, and members of Parliament.

19. (SBU) USAID announced the award of a \$5.8 million program to strengthen democratic linkages within and among the Ugandan Parliament and selected local governments, including four northern districts, and civil society groups. The goal of the program is to build the capacity of these institutions to more effectively identify and carry out their representational functions in the newly reinstated multi-party system; to increase democratic participation in political processes; to improve institutional transparency and accountability; and ultimately to increase and improve essential service delivery to constituents. The program is a 42-month program and the award was made to the Center for International Development at The State University of New York (SUNY).

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SECURITY UPDATE  
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110. (SBU) UN security officials report an upsurge in urban crime rates over the past two weeks in Gulu and Kitgum towns. Two NGOs were robbed by armed assailants in Patongo, Pader District in the past two weeks.

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IN THE MEDIA AND THE WEB  
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¶11. (U) The opening of the USAID office in Gulu received widespread coverage from the Ugandan media. Both national daily newspapers covered the story, as did regional and national broadcast media.

¶12. (U) The Ugandan media also provided coverage of allegations made by Gulu District Chairperson Norbert Mao that substandard seeds and farm implements had been distributed to people resettling out of IDP camps. The Honorable Tarsis Kabwegyere, Minister for Relief and Disaster Preparedness, accused an unknown group of distributing the substandard implements.

BROWNING